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ARGENTINA

The junta's delay in formally announcing how it intends to treat organized labor has led to a scramble among top unionists for control of the movement, which has been virtually leaderless since the coup on March 24.

The junta has remained silent about its plans for labor over the long run, but some of its actions suggest leaner times for the long-privileged workers. The recently announced economic plan, for example, stressed incentives and advantages for industry, price increases, and wage limits. Moreover, the government threatened to use force to end a recent wildcat strike at a Buenos Aires auto plant.

Some officers probably hope that squabbles within the unions will lead to labor's demise as a major political force. For the moment, however, the movement remains largely intact, although the main unions and the principal confederation are under federal control. The unionists are seeking to stave off drastic restrictions of day-to-day union activities, or even abolition of the movement. At least some of the military favor such repression.

The US embassy reports that three distinct groups of labor leaders are vying for the attention of the new military government, although none has made much headway thus far. One of the groups centers on the former governor of Buenos Aires Province, Victorio Calabro, an official of the important metalworkers' union. Calabro stands a good chance of playing an important role in labor nationally if he emerges unscathed from an investigation of his alleged corruption.

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